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## XXI.—SOME ELEMENTS IN MEDIÆVAL DESCRIPTIONS OF THE OTHERWORLD

My chief business in this article is to study the characteristic details in Otherworld descriptions, to see how widely they are used, and to discover any constant traditions in the use. A great deal of work, already done in this field, has made the material accessible;<sup>1</sup> and since my paper is only by way of being a preliminary sketch, I shall frequently use the summaries offered by previous scholars in the case of particular documents. In general, the material with which I shall work is very well known and scarcely subject to any dispute.

I shall include descriptions, whether their authors were conscious or not that the accounts originally depended on what was really an intentional Otherworld scene. Thus it is debatable whether Chrétien knew that the realm of Meleagant was probably based on a transformation of Avalon or Glastonbury. Further, I shall not attempt to distinguish between the Earthly Paradise, heaven, the islands of the blessed, and the Eden from which Adam was ejected,<sup>2</sup> except to note the details of

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to such essays as those by Alfred Nutt, in the *Voyage of Bran*, vol. I; A. C. L. Brown, *Yvain*, in *Harvard Studies and Notes*, vol. VIII; E. J. Becker, *Mediæval Visions of Heaven and Hell*, Baltimore, 1899; W. A. Neilson, *The Court of Love*, *Harvard Studies and Notes*, vol. VI; T. Wright, *St. Patrick's Purgatory*, London, 1844; Baring-Gould, *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, Longmans Green, 1914; Graf, *Miti, Leggende e Superstizioni*, Torino, 1892, vol. I. Professor F. N. Robinson, of Harvard University, has kindly looked over this paper with regard to the Celtic material; Professor G. A. Barton, of Bryn Mawr College, in regard to the Oriental documents mentioned.

<sup>2</sup> Zimmer, *ZDAIth.* XXXIII, pp. 287-8, thinks the Irish Paradise was possibly identical with Adam's lost Paradise.

the individual cases. In other words, I shall not study the development of the theme of Eden as opposed to the theme of an earth-bound Paradise, nor even bother with classifications of that type.

My method in establishing sources and origins will be to determine if possible the fundamental conceptions of the religions involved and to see whether the details, apparently borrowed by some mediæval document, fit naturally into the conception of any particular religion, or whether they seem merely accidental. To determine the fundamental conceptions of any special religion or mythology, I shall either utilize generally accepted views on the subject or study the earliest extant documents in the field. And I shall aim to arrive at the native form of the mythology, untampered with by later influences: for example, the Celtic religion before the introduction of Norse or Oriental ideas.

My argument will depend on three axioms:

(1) That only an element essential, not incidental or accidental, to a certain mythology would undergo a widespread adoption in another field or literature. That is to say, if we find only one example of the bird-paradise among the Celts, only the one will not account for a dozen appearances of the theme in European literature. Perhaps there were more among the Celts; but if we do not find them, we are not safe in assuming their having existed. Again, it is of course conceivable that the single occurrence of a theme has been responsible for a later general use in an alien field; but all the force of probability is against it.

(2) That the particular significance attached to a certain element in one religion will not *necessarily* affect its adoption with a different significance in another field; only the physical characteristics will remain unchanged.

I mean that one faith might hold that the garden of the blessed is open only to souls of one type of virtue, to aristocrats say,<sup>3</sup> but once the garden found its way into literature (especially of another time and country), such a characteristic would be infinitely less stable than the physical characteristics: a late describer of the scene might easily put the general populace into the garden if he liked. Or, to take another illustration, the soul-bridge of the Orient, intended originally for disembodied spirits, might turn up for the convenience of a living pilgrim in a western vision. Thus details might pass with changing meaning from vision to allegory and from allegory to romance.

(3) That the use of one element with several others of definitely marked origin, or in a story of definitely marked origin, is not conclusive evidence for the origin of that particular element. When one considers the inter-relations of mediæval stories and their details, one will realize that elements were shuffled together like cards. And thus a story with Celtic proper names might represent an originally Oriental tale with a few added details from the German. Finally, I may point out that I am not bound to indicate modes of transmission; they are sufficiently well known and I am perfectly well justified in presupposing an infinite number of them. If I do not succeed in pointing out any particular cases of transmission or borrowing, at least I can establish how widely various themes are used in religions, and so prevent their being cited as evidence for the origin in any one particu-

<sup>3</sup> Thus Nutt comments (*Voy. Bran*, I, p. 321, n. 1) on the fact that the Vedic heaven is essentially aristocratic. No deformed person could enter Yima's enclosure in the Avestic heaven. Note also in the Jewish heavens the various realms for various types (*Hebrew Encycl.*, "Paradise," p. 516).

lar field. For the sake of indicating how general is the use of any theme, I shall be forced to use heavy documentation which, after all, is self-justified in almost any case as a tentative bibliography for various topics.

The Otherworld realm is usually quite easy to identify. Its situation is various: on a mountain, perhaps, or on an island, or cut off from the every-day world by some sort of water barrier. The Celts usually put their happy isles far in the west;<sup>4</sup> the Norse, if they thought of any particular locality for the Otherworld, seem to have held it to be in the north;<sup>5</sup> the Oriental earthly Paradise was somewhere in the far east.<sup>6</sup> The other elements, how-

<sup>4</sup>See Schirmer, *Zur Brendanus-Legende*, Leipzig, 1888, pp. 17 ff.; Zimmer, *ZDAlth.* xxxiii, pp. 280 ff. This view is not limited to the Celts: cf. note 6.

<sup>5</sup>See Helge's journey to the north on the coast of Finmark (Rydberg, *Teutonic Mythology*, London, 1889, p. 211); Nutt, *Voy. Bran*, i, pp. 298 ff.; see the voyage north taken by Gorm, Rydberg, pp. 212 ff., and Saxo's *Hist.*, Elton's Trans., pp. 344 ff.; see Elton's intro. to Saxo, p. lxxv: "The dark, fuelless, starless land, seems like a myth built on the facts of the Arctic islands."

<sup>6</sup>Note the garden "Eastward in Eden," Genesis ii, 8 ff.; travels to the east in the vision of the Monk of Eynsham (Arber's Reprints, no. 18); "The garden of delight lieth on earth in this world in the regions of the east," D'Ancona and Bacci, *Manuale delle letteratura Italiana*, i, pp. 437 ff.; Dante enters his garden of Eden from the west; see the scene on the hill Caucasus, Thoms, *Prose Romances*, iii, p. 242; see Baring-Gould, *Curious Myths*, pp. 251, 253, 255, 257, 258, 525; T. Wright, *St. Pat. Purg.*, p. 94 (opposite the Ganges); (in India) *Abhandlungen der Philologisch-historischen Classe der Königl. Sächs. Gesells. der Wiss.*, Leipzig, 1876, viii, p. 123, § 13. See a comparison of Eden with the Babylonian Paradise at Eridu, Jeremias, *Bab. Conc. of Heaven and Hell* (trans. Hutchinson), London, 1902, p. 39; Hibbert Lectures, 1887, Sayce, p. 238; Jastrow, *Hebrew and Bab. Traditions*, N. Y., 1914, pp. 218 and 209. See also Graf, *Miti, Leggende*, vol. i, pp. 1 and 3.

Compare, however, the Egyptian journey with the sun-god to the west, Maspero, *Dawn of Civilization* (trans. McClure), third ed., N. Y., 1897, p. 197; the Greek isles of the Hesperides and the Ely-

ever, are sufficiently fixed: a splendid castle, usually guarded by armed figures;<sup>7</sup> and a garden, with a beautiful fountain or fair running streams, and trees and remarkable birds. For the people in the story the land is hard to enter, and sometimes it is still more difficult to leave.<sup>8</sup> If one does succeed in getting away, one is often astonished how much time has slipped by during the sojourn there.<sup>9</sup> Finally, one is sometimes forbidden to describe the details experienced in this unusual journey.<sup>10</sup> Such are the elements in many accounts of the Otherworld, and their use is exceedingly wide-spread. Although, of course, there is a possibility that actual mediæval gardens, mountains, and islands, or manuscript illuminations of such things, furnished such descriptive details, which would then in no way be based on Otherworld sources, yet in most cases the combination of several

sium (*Od.* iv, ll. 563 ff.); and the Fortunate Isles. Compare also Cockayne—"bi Weste Spaygne," and Baring-Gould, *Curious Myths*, pp. 525 ff. It is reported as a common saying when a man is killed in the fighting in France to-day that he has "gone west."

<sup>7</sup> See the two men of copper in *Huon de Bordeaux*, vv. 4553-4570 and 4715; Paton, *Fairy Mythol.*, p. 168; note also the men of copper, *Perlesvaus*, branch xvii, title xiii; the armed figures at the bridge of the Fata Morgana, Bojardo, *Orl. Innam.*, II, vii, 42 ff.

<sup>8</sup> No foreigner returns from the land of Meleagant in the *Chev. Char.* (see des. of the land, ll. 641 ff.). See also Bojardo, *Orl. Innam.*, II, VIII, 39 ff.

<sup>9</sup> See the *Voy. Bran* (when one man returns to Ireland, he falls into a heap of ashes), Brown, *Yvain*, pp. 58 ff., and Zimmer, *ZDA*, XXXIII, pp. 258 ff.; see the romance of Thomas the Rymer, and that of Ogier the Dane and Morgan the Fay, Child, *Eng. Scot. Pop. Ballads*, I, p. 326; see D'Ancona and Bacci, *Manuale*, I, pp. 437 ff.; Baring-Gould, *Cur. Myths*, p. 546; Campbell, *Pop. Tales*, II, p. 74.

<sup>10</sup> The fée bids her lover not to tell of her in the *Debility of the Ultonian Warriors*, Brown, *Yvain*, pp. 31 ff. (Windisch, *Berichte der Gesells. der Wiss. zu Leipzig, Phil.-hist. Classe*, XXXVI, p. 336, and Hull, *Cuchullin Saga*, pp. 97 ff.). The same is true of the fée in the Launfal story, see *Romania* VIII, p. 50.

elements in a familiar manner or certain definite traces of the Otherworld conventions (such as the difficulty of entering or of leaving) have identified the scenes for us with a fair degree of certainty. And sometimes we can trace the story back definitely to an Otherworld adventure.

## I

### THE MOUNTAIN

The mountain is frequently used as a symbol in the allegorical writings of the middle ages. If this and related points be held as significant,<sup>11</sup> we need not go far to establish the tradition of what forms a great part of the scenery in mediæval allegory. For example the mountain appears in the literature of the Court of Love, where the apparently earliest instance, for our purposes, is that in Claudian's *De Nuptiis Honorii et Mariae*.<sup>12</sup> There the home of Venus is situated in a flat plain on the top of a mountain which man is unable to climb. The region is further protected by a golden wall, it is not subject to storms of rain or snow, and perpetual spring reigns in that beautiful country.<sup>13</sup> The figure is apparently common: we may note the instance in the fourteenth-century

<sup>11</sup>See the *Chastel d'Amors*, Neilson, *Court of Love*, p. 28, where no fire is required because love makes perpetual summer. See the four portals in the palace of Andreas Capellanus, Neilson, p. 46, and compare the four portals in Fregoso's *Dialogo di Fortuna*, ed. 1531, cap. XIII-XV, and the similar palace in Prester John's letter, Zarneke, *Abh. der Phil.-hist. Classe der Gesells. der Wiss.*, Leipzig, 1876, vol. 8, pp. 123 ff., §§ 35 ff. (see § 42). And see the constant use of the elements of crystal, the pillars, the garden, the fountain, the river, the streams, the mountain, etc.

<sup>12</sup>Claudian flourished circ. 400 A.D., but may be included in the study as a precursor of the middle ages.

<sup>13</sup>See Claudian, *de Nuptiis*, ll. 49 ff. Summarized by Neilson, pp. 15 f.

German *Minneburg*; <sup>14</sup> that in Grosseteste's allegory, with his castle on a high and polished rock <sup>15</sup>; Gawain Douglas's Palace of Honour on the top of a hill.<sup>16</sup> Some of the mountains are jewelled or made of a jewel: such is that in Alain Chartier's *Hospital d'Amours* whose foundation is a rock of ruby and whose walls are part crystal;<sup>17</sup> and that in the *Ospital d'Amours* of René d'Anjou, where the church is founded on a rock of diamond.<sup>18</sup>

It will be remembered that the house of Nature in Alanus de Insulis' poem, the *Anticlaudianus*, is situated on a mountain. So too seems to be the house of Fortune in the same poem: <sup>19</sup>

In the midst of the sea, there is a cliff which the water lashes continually and with which the wave disputes and has strife: a cliff beaten in various wise and smitten by continual movement; now wholly buried in the waves, and again rising from the sea, it breathes the upper air. It does not retain its shape. Each moment various change transforms it." It is covered with flowers when Zephyr breathes upon it; again Boreas cruelly destroys all the flowers. Etc.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Neilson, p. 124. See the summary by G. Ehrisman, *PBB*, xxii, pp. 303 ff.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137. The English version alone is accessible to me. See the "Castel of Love," published by the Philol. Soc. (Early Eng. volume), edited by Weymouth, 1865, p. 30.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162. See ed. of Douglas by T. Small, Edinburgh, 1874, vol. i, pp. 51 ff.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>19</sup> The material on the Fortune tradition offered here is taken mainly from the chapter on "Fortune's Dwelling Place" in my as yet unpublished dissertation. There I have made a study of possible sources of this early description in the *Anticlaudianus*, together with a more detailed investigation of other points in this type than I can present here. Other material on the mountain is to be found in Graf, *Miti, Leggende*, pp. 7 ff. See also *Harvard Studies and Notes*, v, p. 174, n. 1 and *passim*.

<sup>20</sup> Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, 210, col. 557 ff., §§ 397. This mountain Jean de Meun took over with the rest of the description into the *Rom*.



In the *Roman de la Poire* Fortune declares one of her habits to be as follows:

L'un met del val el mont      et puis le faz cheoir,<sup>21</sup>

and Watriquet de Couvin places a whole city, of which Fortune is porter, on a mountain top:

Quar cil qui au plus haut demeure  
Trebusche et chiet en petit d'eure, etc.<sup>22</sup>

In the horrible valley below, Death receives the victims. In Nicole de Margivale's *Panthere d'Amours* the foundation of the house of Fortune is a great rock of ice, suggested perhaps by the folklore mountains of crystal, but having the added symbolical value of a lack of durability. This feature reminds us of the foundation of Chaucer's house of Fame.<sup>23</sup>

Thomas, Marquis of Saluzzo (1319-1417), incorporated an original version of the figure into his *Chevalier Errante*: The mountain, on which Fortune has her dwelling place, is the highest rock that the eye has ever seen. At its top are two fearful crags and between them sits the

*de la Rose* ll. 5941 ff., as noted by Langlois, *Orig. Sources*, Paris, 1891, pp. 96 ff. Petrarch apparently refers to the account in Alanus, ed. Mestica, canz. xviii, ll. 77. Again it appears in Taillevant's *Régime de Fortune*, p. 713 (Bal. iv, *Les Oeuvres de Maistre Alain Chartier*, ed. du Chesne, Paris, 1617). From the French of the *Roman* the tradition goes to Lydgate's *Disguising at London*, noted by Brotanek, *Eng. Maskenspiele*, pp. 309 ff.

<sup>21</sup> II, ll. 45-6.

<sup>22</sup> *Dis de L'Escharbote*, ed. Scheler, 1868, p. 399 f.

<sup>23</sup> See the *Panthere*, ll. 1958. See Sypherd, *Studies in the HF*, pp. 117 f. He notes the Palace of Mars in the *Teseide* (vii, 32) which is built of ice. Chaucer's house of Fame is restored to Fortune by Sir William Jones in the *Palace of Fortune* (see Koepfel, *Eng. Stud.*, xxviii, pp. 43-53). It was used by Ben Jonson in his *Masque of Queens*, and apparently by Dekker in his *Troia-Nova Triumphans* (see my note, *MLN*, xxxiii, p. 177).

goddess, who causes her victims to be thrown from the height. On the side of the rock traitors of all kinds are drawn and quartered.<sup>24</sup> Fregoso's *Dialogo di Fortuna* puts Fortune's palace on a mountain, which is so slippery that one must have a guide to climb it.<sup>25</sup> The mountain was evidently very familiar in the Fortune tradition: it is referred to by Jean de Condé,<sup>26</sup> and interpreted by Ariosto.<sup>27</sup>

Somewhat similar use of the theme is found in the mountain of Plutina,<sup>28</sup> and the mountain where Palestine, in the tale of *Melusine*, dwells guarding her father's treasure.<sup>29</sup>

In allegory the figure is employed to express the meaning of inaccessibility—whether to love or to fortune—the difficulties of approach, and the perils of success. This meaning, however, does not affect the point that the mountain almost undoubtedly comes from Otherworld descriptions, especially since it is generally found together with other features of the Otherworld, such as the sumptuous palace, the garden, the fountain, the rivers, and the sea.

One point further: we have noted that the mountains or rocks are often jewelled or crystalline. It may be convenient to note here that crystal is an extremely common

<sup>24</sup> See the summary, part two, Gorra, *Studi di Critica Letteraria*, Bologna, 1892, pp. 45 ff.

<sup>25</sup> *Dial.*, ed. 1531, cap. XIII ff. For the slipperiness see n. 30 below on the glass mountain.

<sup>26</sup> (Baudoin de Condé, ed. Scheler), 3, p. 54, ll. 160.

<sup>27</sup> As the wheel of Fortune: *Rime e Satire*, Florence, 1824, p. 207 (Sat. III).

<sup>28</sup> Trissino, *Tutt. le Op.*, Verona, 1729, *Ital. Lib.*, II, pp. 78 f. (Lib. XI).

<sup>29</sup> Skeat, *EETS*, London, repr., 1899, ll. 4630:

Till some approche and come, of lineage our,  
To that by mountain by fors and strength he  
To ascende an-hye Aboue the hill to see, etc.

feature in Otherworld accounts in general,<sup>30</sup> and so here may be considered as indicating the character of this special tradition of the mountain.

Granting, then, that the mountain does come from

<sup>30</sup>See the ship of glass in the Celtic story of Connla the Fair, Brown, *Yvain*, p. 29; pillar of silver and glass in the *Serglige Conculaind*, *ibid.*, pp. 34 ff.; the sea resembling green glass, *Imram Maelduin*, § 22, Brown, p. 60, Stokes, *Rev. Celt.*, ix, pp. 447-495, x, pp. 50-95; the seven crystal walls in the *Fis Adamnain*, § 11 (Boswell, *An Irish Precursor of Dante*, London, 1908); the tower of glass, Brown, *Roman. Rev.*, 1912, p. 158, n. 28; Lydgate's *Temple of Glass*; the sea of glass like unto crystal in the *Book of Rev.*, also the city of pure gold like unto clear glass, the river of the water of life clear as crystal; the stones of crystal, *Book of Enoch*, xiv, 10, and the building of stones of ice, LXX (I have used the text of Dr. Richard Lawrence's translation, copied by Becker, *Med. Visions*, pp. 22 ff.); the wall of crystal, Monk of Eynsham, *Arber's reprints*, no. 18—see Becker, *Med. Vis.*, p. 96; the crystal building, Neilson, *Court of Love*, p. 43; the chamber with ceiling of transparent crystal in the *Midrash Kohen*, *Hebrew Enc.*, "Paradise," p. 516. See also the Celtic palace of glass, Baring-Gould, *Cur. Myths*, p. 536; the glass mountain in Teutonic mythology, *ibid.*, p. 539 (bears' claws were buried with the dead to assist them in climbing); on the slipperiness, see the four very smooth steps leading to the palace in Giraut de Calanson, Neilson, p. 24; the Insula Vitrea or Isle de Voire, *Romania* xii, p. 510; Nutt, *Voy. Bran.*, i, pp. 236 ff.; *Romania*, xxiv, p. 502, and xxvii, pp. 529 ff., for the connection with Glastonbury, and see Rhys, *Arthurian Legend*, pp. 333, 312, and 354. See the walls of crystal in the underground realm of *Sir Orpheo*. See the "erber of crystal walls" as of bright gold within the cumly hill in the fifteenth-century poem quoted by Wright, *St. Pat. Purg.*, p. 85. See the ice bridge in the Breton mystère of Owain, cited by Miss Hibbard, *Rom. Rev.* iv, p. 174, and the bridge of glass in the *Imram Maelduin*. For the glasberg, see *Harvard Stud. and Notes*, v, p. 159, p. 171 and note 3. See the mountains of ice in the Vision of Alberic, Becker, *op. cit.*, p. 43. Also see Heinrich von dem Türlein's *Dieu Crône*, ed. Scholl, ll. 12947. Crystal and glass and ice are obviously used everywhere in Otherworld descriptions. For gold in the Otherworld, see Miss Paton, *Fairy Mythology of Arthurian Romance*, pp. 133 ff. See also *Couronnement de Louis*, *SATF*, Langlois, 1888, ll. 1795-6, l. 1827 (the gold of Avalon).

Otherworld accounts, what in that greater channel of descriptive detail is its particular origin? Beside the field of allegory, it also turns up in the field of Arthurian romance. The Grail castle is often situated on a mountain.<sup>31</sup> The fée in the *Lanzelet* has a castle (underwater, to be sure, but that does not affect the point) built on a splendid crystal mountain.<sup>32</sup> Arthur's court itself sometimes seems to be situated on the top of a very lofty mountain which protects it from mortal eyes.<sup>33</sup> All this would suggest that perhaps the conception was originally Celtic.

Such, however, does not appear to be the case. If at any time the Celts did borrow the idea of the Otherworld scene on a mountain top, no evidence that I have discovered shows that the idea itself is natively Celtic. The distinguishing characteristic of the Otherworld according

<sup>31</sup> See Munsalvaesch. See the striking instance of this in *Der Jüngere Titurel* (*Deutsche National Literatur*, Hoefische Epik, Piper, Stuttgart, pp. 466 ff.), ll. 319 ff., the mountain all of "onichel." See the learned study *Tannhäuser and the Mountain of Venus*, Barto, Oxf. Univ. Press, 1916, which, however, fails to discriminate carefully in the matter of chronology and tradition.

<sup>32</sup> For this I must refer to Miss Paton's *Fairy Mythology*, p. 185: the original is not accessible to me.

<sup>33</sup> See Gervase of Tilbury: "In Sicilia est mons Aetna . . . Hunc montem vulgares mongibel appellant. In hujus deserto narrant indignae Arturum magnum nostris temporibus apparuisse," *Ot. Imp.*, ed. Liebrecht, p. 12; Caesarius of Heisterbach: "In monte Gyber; ibi habet dominus meus Rex Arcturus. Idem mons flammam evomit sicut Vulcanus," *Dial. Mir.*, ed. Strange, Dist. XII, cap. XII. Barto, *Tannhäuser*, p. 16, says that Arthur's court was originally located within the mountain, but that later that idea seemed incomprehensible and the picture of Arthur's court on the mountain top "better fitted the usual conception of the grail-realm." This will obviously not explain the origin of the conception of other courts on top of a mountain. I have a further reference, which I have been unable to verify, to Morgain's castle on Mongibello in Italy, according to the thirteenth century *Floriant et Florete*. See further, Barto, *Journal of Eng. and Ger. Philol.*, xv, pp. 377 ff.

to the Celts was, as we shall see, the situation on a remote island, or—and this is its closest approach to the figure we are studying—the situation *inside of* a hill.<sup>34</sup>

Let us briefly examine this latter phenomenon and its manifestations in romance. In the *Echtra Nera* the hero left his people at a feast and entered a fairy hill: there he took a wife, had a child, and at length returned to his own people, finding them still engaged in the same feast.<sup>35</sup> A similar underground scene is referred to in the *Echtra Condla*.<sup>36</sup> The underground realm is perfectly familiar in Celtic folklore,<sup>37</sup> and when it appears in romance it seems easily recognizable. In the romance of Thomas the Rhymer, the fairy queen leads Thomas "in at Eldone hill" underneath a "derne lee."<sup>38</sup> Sir Orpheo, in the romance of that name, follows the fairy throng into a hill:

In then at the roche the ladies ryde,  
He went sone after, he nolde not byde,  
When he was into the roche ygo.<sup>39</sup>

William of Newbury tells the familiar story of the two green children come from the underground world and found in a hollow at Suffolk.<sup>40</sup> One remembers also the

<sup>34</sup> There are, of course, the underwater realms, the realms cut off from the world by mist, etc. These I shall take up in more detail later. They involve no conflict here. In his study of the Celtic Otherworld Nutt observes two main types: the oversea and the hollow hill (*Voy. Bran*, I, p. 229); so too Zimmer, *ZDAIth.*, xxxiii, p. 277. MacCulloch mentions all four types (*Relig. of the Anc. Celts*, Edinburgh 1911, p. 362).

<sup>35</sup> Brown, *Yvain*, p. 59, n. 1; Stokes, *Rev. Celt.*, x, pp. 214 ff.

<sup>36</sup> Brown, *Yvain*, p. 28; Windisch, *Kurzgefasste Irische Gram.*, pp. 118-120; Nutt, *Voy. Bran*, I, pp. 144 f.; Zimmer, *ZDAIth.*, xxxiii, pp. 261 ff.

<sup>37</sup> See also the *Wooring of Etain*, Nutt, *Voy. Bran*, I, pp. 174 ff.

<sup>38</sup> Child, *Eng. Scot. Pop. Ballads*, I, p. 326.

<sup>39</sup> Ll. 333. See for a study of the matters in this romance the article by Professor Kittredge, *Amer. Jour. Philol.*, vii, pp. 194 ff.

<sup>40</sup> *Historia*, lib. I, c. 27.

legend of Herla<sup>41</sup>; the mountain of Venus in the *Tannhäuser* legend;<sup>42</sup> the green mound in *Gawain and the Green Knight*.<sup>43</sup> The instances are always clearly distinguished<sup>44</sup> and they differ essentially from the cases where the Otherworld appears *on* and not *within* the mountain. The whole point of interest in this type of Otherworld for the audience of the story is that it *is* underground: not that it is vaguely associated with a hill of some kind. Such a point would be sure to survive in at least nine cases out of ten. If the Celtic folklore has made a contribution, then, it appears as if it had to do with only this sort of fairy hill. And one might cavil at this point, urging that the underground fairyland is not restricted to the Celts<sup>45</sup> and that it appears in the mythology of the Orient. Thus it is found in the Babylonian conception of heaven, where Gilgamesh on his journey to the far country enters the mountain Mashu which is guarded

<sup>41</sup> Mapes, *de Nugis Cur.*, Dist. I, c. 11, Camden Soc., Wright, p. 83.

<sup>42</sup> See Remy, *Jour. Eng. Ger. Philol.*, XII, pp. 53 ff.; and Barto, *Tannhäuser and the Mountain of Venus*, showing that the Grail was sometimes located inside of a mountain (p. 11); that Arthur's court sometimes was held to be within the mountain (pp. 11 ff.); and that Aetna, on which the Arthurian court was sometimes situated, was also held to be an entrance to Hell (p. 14). On this last point, see Mausser, *die Gesch. vom Höllenberg Walkalla*, Leipzig, 1910, pp. 250-8.

<sup>43</sup> See Hulbert, *Mod. Philol.* XIII, pp. 73, 127; Kittredge, *Gawain and the Green Knight*, Cambridge 1916, pp. 119, 142, 198.

<sup>44</sup> See the article already cited, *Amer. Jour. Philol.*, VII, pp. 194 ff.; Burnham, *PMLA*, XXIII, pp. 406, n. 1, and see the connection suggested between the Hörselberg and Erceldoune, pp. 390 f.; Remy, *JEGPhilol.*, XII, pp. 53 ff.; Wright, *St. Patrick's Purg.*, pp. 83 ff.—note p. 85 f. the poem describing the cumly hill. See Staerk, *Ueber den Ursprung der Grallegende*, 1903, p. 53; Nutt, *Voy. Bran*, I, p. 187; and a later instance in Campbell, *Pop. Tales*, II, p. 74. See also *Harv. Studies and Notes*, v, p. 167.

<sup>45</sup> As Barto does in his study of the *Tannhäuser* legend.

by wild beasts.<sup>46</sup> Among the Babylonians, the country of the dead was regularly called the "Underworld."<sup>47</sup> But even considering Hades and other lower-world realms,<sup>48</sup> this view is not so extraordinarily common in Oriental eschatology that the Celtic analogues, both from quality and proximity, would not seem to be a sufficient source for the romantic material.

The fact remains, perhaps more clearly evident, that these underground realms of fairy lore do not explain the mountain foundations of Otherworld scenes. The latter seem to be the product of a different sort of fancy or vision. The norm is that of a great rock or impressive mountain which forms the base of a palace or garden, and which in no way suggests having once been inhabited by the fairy throngs. Furthermore it occurs much too often for us to be justified in feeling that it is simply the sophistication of the old figure, that people forgetting the old myth of the underground realm rationalized the story by putting the scene on the top of the mountain. Some further illustrations may serve to show the unlikelihood of this.

<sup>46</sup> A. Jeremias, *The Babylonian Conception of Heaven and Hell* (trans. Hutchinson), London, 1902, see the journey p. 19 and pp. 34 ff.; Mt. Mashu, p. 35. See also M. Jastrow, *Hebrew and Babylonian Tradition*, pp. 206 ff. In later times the Persians also held that the dead lived inside the mountain, see *Vendidad*, XIX, 31. Jastrow points out that the gods dwell *on* the mountain and the dead dwell *inside* (*The Relig. of Babyl. and Assyria*, Boston, 1898, p. 558).

<sup>47</sup> Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>48</sup> See too the mountains regarded as the abode of the dead, Toy, *Introduction to the Hist. of Relig.*, 1913, § 65; the mountain as the entrance to the underworld, Delitzsch, *Wo lag das Paradies*, Leipzig 1881, p. 117, § 13, and see Aralu of the Assyrians thus conceived doubly as the foundation and as the edifice itself of the abode of the dead, p. 120. See for the Chaldaeans, Z. A. Ragozin, *The Story of Chaldaea*, N. Y., 1890, p. 276 and p. 153.

Would the underworld theme explain the use of the mountain in Dante's *Purgatory*? That example will suggest many other similar cases which have been cited in relation to that, and among them the fourteenth-century Italian legend:

"The garden of delight lieth on earth in this world in the regions of the East, upon a mountain exceeding high beyond all other mountains and above all the earthly world." The three monks who see this Paradise reach it eventually by climbing a mountain a hundred miles high.<sup>49</sup>

Faustus, in his travels, goes to the hill Caucasus, the highest in all that tropic near the borders of Scythia, and from there he sees the earthly Paradise.<sup>50</sup> Baring-Gould, in his learned study of Otherworld accounts, refers to a preacher Maffreth who said that Paradise was situated in eastern Asia on the top of a lofty mountain, which was so high that it escaped the deluge.<sup>51</sup>

For such mountains as these, Celtic lore seems to afford but slight parallels.<sup>52</sup> Instead of seeming like fairy hills, they have an individuality of their own, in their smooth and even slippery sides and particularly in their tremendous height, which cannot be explained by stories traceable

<sup>49</sup> Referred to by Grandgent, *Dante*, N. Y., 1916, p. 205. Printed by D'Ancona and Bacci, *Manuale della Letteratura Italiana*, I, pp. 437 ff.

<sup>50</sup> Thoms, *Prose Romances*, III, p. 242. Referred to by Becker, *Med. Vis.*, p. 92.

<sup>51</sup> *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, p. 255.

<sup>52</sup> Brendan climbs a mountain to see in the distance the land of Promise and he remains there three days, Schirmer, *Zur Brendanus-Legende*, Leipzig, 1888; Zimmer, *ZDAth.*, XXXIII, pp. 135 ff. See the mountain of stones which constitutes one island in the *English Voyage of St. Brendan*, Percy Soc., XIV, p. 2. See also the mountain on an island in the *Imran Mailduin*, *Rev. Celt.*, IX, p. 483, and the cliffs which are not dissimilar to those near the house of Fortune in the *Anticlaudianus*. See Brown, *Yvain*, p. 48.



to the Celtic nor by the descriptions of the Celtic Sîdh. The proper source was suggested, I think, by Hagen and Staerk in their study of the situation in connection with the Grail.<sup>53</sup> The letters of Prester John, which offer so many parallels to details in the Grail stories, also contain much material which may explain this conception of the mountain, and they point for an origin to Oriental mythology. Also the Apochryphal Book of Enoch, filled of course with Oriental lore, has some passages interesting for us here in its description of the Otherworld:

"They carried me to a lofty spot, to a mountain, the top of which reached to heaven." There he sees the stone which supports the corners of the earth and the firmament of heaven; and the stars of heaven are visible "bound together, like great mountains" (xvii). In the west he sees a great and lofty mountain, a strong rock, and "four delightful places. Deep and capacious internally, and very smooth. Here will be collected all the souls of men until the day of judgment" (xxii). He sees a mountain of fire, flashing both by day and by night. He proceeds toward it and sees seven splendid mountains (xxiv). He sees a holy mountain and deep dry valleys. Here shall be collected all who utter unbecoming language against God. He also sees mountains of gold and silver (xxv).<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Paul Hagen, *Der Gral, QF*, 85, Strassburg, 1900; W. Staerk, *Ueber den Ursprung der Grallegende*, Tübingen und Leipzig, 1903, p. 47. See also Peebles, *The Legend of Longinus*, Baltimore, p. 196.

<sup>54</sup> For the text of the Book of Enoch, see selections in Becker, *Med. Vis.*, pp. 22 ff. Note the use of the mountain in Prester John, Zarncke, *Abhandl. der Phil.-hist. Classe der Königl. Sächsisch. Ges. der Wiss.*, Leipzig, 1876, viii, p. 123, § 13: "4 montes, quorum montium cacumina minime videntur. . . et in cacuminibus montium est paradysus terrena, de qua Adam eiectus est, et non est aliquis qui habeat accessum ad montes illos propter tenebras," etc.; § 16, Thomas buried in the church on a mountain top. See also *Abh.*, vii, p. 839, §§ 23, 28. Note the use of Prester John in Mandeville, *Abh.*, viii, p. 135, §§ 20 ff. It is worth while to note in Prester John the many elements used in romance: the whirling castle (referred to by Hagen, *op. cit.*, p. 13) in *Abh.*, viii, p. 166, § 33: "Et ibi est speciale palacium presbiteri Iohannis et doctorum, ubi tenentur concilia. Et illud potest volvi ad modum rotæ,

And in the *Book of Revelation*, one of the seven angels takes John "to a great and high mountain and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (xxi, 10). But such visions,<sup>55</sup> showing constant association somehow of mountains with the descriptions of the Otherworld, are not the only evidence of the Oriental use.

What is really important is, not that we find mountains occasionally in Oriental religions, but that in the Oriental description of the Otherworld the mountain is often a prime essential as it is not elsewhere. According to the early Persian religion of the Avesta, the heavenly water of life flows down on the summit of the Hara-berezaiti. On that mountain, reaching to heaven, Ahura-Mazda rears a dwelling-place for Mithra, and there too is the garden of Yima.<sup>56</sup> The Mohammedans put the earthly Paradise on a mountain and Adam, in falling, fell literally from

et est testudinatum ad modum coeli." For the revolving castle in the Otherworld of romance, see: Brown, *Yvain*, p. 79 (Celtic uses); the revolving fiery rampart, *Voy. Mailduin*, Stokes, *Rev. Celt.*, x, p. 81; the *Mule sanz Frein* (ed. R. T. Hill, Baltimore, 1911), ll. 440; the *Perlesvaus* (the "Castle of Endeavor" in S. Evans's translation, *The High Hist. of the Holy Grail*, Everyman's Lib., pp. 206 ff.) an episode that seems somehow related to that in the *Mule*; Sypherd, *Studies in the House of Fame*, the use in Chaucer, pp. 144 ff., 173 ff.; Kittredge, *Gaw. and the Green Knight*, p. 245, n. 1.

<sup>55</sup> See also the *Apocalypse of Peter* (Becker, *Med. Vis.*, pp. 31 f.) where the twelve disciples go up to a mountain and have the vision of heaven. See the mt. of joy in the *Vision of Thurcill*, § 10 (Becker, p. 98). See the striking use of the mountain figure—a cliff where men and women were hurled down, compelled to climb again, and hurled down—suggesting an Oriental source indirectly for the similar figure in the Fortune tradition—in the *Vision of Alberic*, and in the *Apocalypse of Peter* (Becker, pp. 41-2).

<sup>56</sup> See *Vendidad*, *Fargad* xxi, 20; *Khorda-Avesta*, xxvi, 12; also the *Bundahis*, xx, 1 ff.; Spiegel, *Avesta*, iii, liv; Dillmann, *Genesis* (Edinburgh, 1897), i, p. 109; Delitzsch, *Wo lag das Paradies*, pp. 112 f.

the garden at its top.<sup>57</sup> The Babylonians believed in the mountain Mashu which reached to Aralu (Paradise).<sup>58</sup> The pre-exilic Hebrew God was a God of the Mountain, and sacred mountains are extremely familiar in Hebrew tradition.<sup>59</sup> To the Chaldaeans, a mountain like a pillar joined heaven and earth and about that the heavenly spheres revolved.<sup>60</sup> And the Egyptians thought that four mountains upheld the skies.<sup>61</sup> In all these cases the use of the figure is not merely incidental, but it is the unifying, characterizing feature of the Otherworld scene: either the garden of the blessed is situated on the mountain; or, as in the case of Olympus,<sup>62</sup> the gods dwell on the top and their abode becomes identified with heaven. Here we have the emphasis on height and on the other qualities characteristic of the mountain in the mediæval Otherworld.<sup>63</sup> Although in early times such a conception was probably not limited to the Orient,<sup>64</sup> yet in the various Oriental

<sup>57</sup> MacDonald, *The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam*, Chicago, 1912, p. 289.

<sup>58</sup> See M. Jastrow, *Relig. of Babyl. and Assyr.*, p. 489; Jeremias, *The Babl. Conc. of Heaven and Hell*, pp. 19, 34 ff. For the doctrine that the dead lived inside of these mountains, see note 46 above.

<sup>59</sup> Jastrow, *Heb. and Babyl. Trad.*, p. 26 and p. 170. See *Exodus*, xix; II *Esd.* viii, 52. See the Buddhistic figure, E. W. Hopkins, *Relig. of India*, pp. 359, 461, 532.

<sup>60</sup> See Z. A. Ragozin, *The Story of Chaldaea*, N. Y., 1890, pp. 153 and 276.

<sup>61</sup> See G. Maspero, *The Dawn of Civilization*, (trans. McClure) 3d ed., N. Y. 1897, p. 199.

<sup>62</sup> Olympus is clearly not to be equated with anything like the Celtic sídh. Cf. Nutt, *Voy. Bran*, I, pp. 282 f.

<sup>63</sup> See note 55.

<sup>64</sup> See the tradition among the Miztecs of Mexico that the gods once built a sumptuous palace on a mountain and that there the gods first dwelt on earth. This myth is reported (without reference to source) in Bayley's *Lost Language of Symbolism*, London, 1912, II, p. 224. See the myth in West Java of paradise on a mt., E. B. Tyler, *Primitive Culture*, London, 1871, II, p. 55.

faiths, as not in the Teutonic or Celtic, it was extremely prominent or even dominant, and, what is more, it is there clearly at home, fitting naturally into the cosmic scheme conceived in those religions, as it would not fit, apparently, among the Norse or Celts.

Further evidence on all these points will appear later in this study, but from what we have covered I think the conclusion presents itself strikingly that the figure spread from eastern mythology and lore to the west rather than that it sprang up in the west as an independent conception. Coincidences of the latter sort are far from uncommon, but it seems to me that on the face of the great bulk of evidence it is going out of one's way most unnecessarily and even arbitrarily to require them. Why should we have new mountains spring up in a night, as it were, in European literature, when Mahomet and his mountain stood perfectly ready near at hand?

## II

### THE GARDEN

The enchanting garden of the Otherworld is at once the most definitely marked and the vaguest of the Otherworld features. We always find the lovely meadows, the beautiful flowers with their subtly strange perfumes, the sparkling fountains and streams, and the tree of life. These definite characteristics appear, but in a multitude of varying forms, and it is by examining some of these variations that any attempt to identify the source of any particular element may prove successful.

#### (a) The streams:

The garden of the Otherworld is watered by a fountain, and from this the inhabitants obtain the water of life. But this feature does not show any constant traits that enable

us to identify it: sometimes there are two fountains, one sweet and one bitter<sup>65</sup>; and sometimes the water induces sleep<sup>66</sup>; but in general it is a universal conception.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Claudian's *De Nuptiis*, Neilson, p. 15 f. See too the fountain in Apuleius, Neilson, p. 14. Such contrast in qualities, characteristic often of matters which have to do with Fortuna, is found everywhere. See the two fountains (one sweet, one bitter) from which Fionn drank, Nutt, *Leg. of the Holy Grail*, London, 1888, p. 201; two wells, one clear and one muddy, the Eng. Voy. of Brendan, Percy Soc. xiv, p. 12. Instances of other kinds may be worth recording: the island in the *Imram Maolduin* (*Rev. Celt.*, ix, pp. 480-1, § XIII) where all objects placed on one side of a brazen palisade become black, those on the other become white; cf. the Welsh *Peredur*, Loth, *Les Mab.*, II, p. 87, where the sheep on one side of the river are white, those on the other are black; and the tree in the *Peredur* half green and half in flames; the island in the *Imram curaig UaCorra*, Zimmer, *ZDAIth.* xxxiii, pp. 189 ff.: one side inhabited by dead men, the other by living men. See too the divided valley in the vision of Charles, described in William of Malmesbury, *GRAngl.*, Rolls Series, II, § 111: one fountain of boiling water, one pleasant and cool (noted by Wright, *St. Pat. Purg.*, pp. 20 ff.). See also the Fortuna-like figure of Adam in the *Vision of Thurcill*, who with one eye weeps for the damned and with the other laughs for the blessed (Becker, *Med. Vis.*, p. 98. Note also his vest of various colors.)

<sup>66</sup> See the fountain in the *Imr. Mail.* (§ 20), which on Friday and Wednesday gives water, on Sundays milk, and on feast days wine. See also the fountain in the *Imram curaig UaCorra* (Zimmer, *ZDAIth.*, xxxiii, pp. 189 ff.): when the travellers waken from the sleep which has been brought on, they discover that the stones which they collected are transformed.

<sup>67</sup> See the fountain of nectar in Capellanus' *De Arte Honesti Amandi*, Neilson (*Court of Love*), p. 46, where the wonderful tree has its roots—cf. the Norse Ygdrasil with its roots over the fountains of Mimir and Urd; Aen. Sylvius, "frigidi fontes," *Op. Omnia*, Basileae 1571, Pont. Ep. Lib. I, Ep. cviii; *Echtra Cormaic*, Zimmer, *ZDA*, xxxiii, pp. 264; Baring-Gould, *Cur. Myths*, p. 535 f. (the spirits drink and obtain life); Brown, *Yvain*, Slothful Gillie, pp. 104 ff.; the fountain in *Yvain*, *Graelent*, *Melusine*, and other stories where the fée appears; the *Mule sanz Fraïn* l. 385; the magic fountain restoring health, in the Babylonian, Jeremias, *Bab. Conc. Heaven and Hell*, pp. 34 ff.; the *Qur' An*, LV, 45; Baring-Gould, *Cur. Myths*, p. 251 f. and p. 255; the fountain of youth in India, E. B. Tylor, *Researches into the*

The inhabitants were also refreshed, however, by means of the streams which nearly always flow through the fair meadows. Such a stream is fairly common in Celtic lore,<sup>68</sup> and it is found really everywhere. According to the *Phoenix*, limpid streams water the plains of the distant and desirable land.<sup>69</sup> In Lucian's *True History*, there are beautiful and transparent rivers rolling down to the Otherworld sea. In the Jewish Eden, there were two hundred and forty-eight rivulets of balsam and attar.<sup>70</sup> The river of the water of life is described in the *Book of Revelation*.

In Alanus de Insulis' account of Fortune's abode,<sup>71</sup> there are two rivers of contrasting quality:

One is sweet as honey and seduces those who drink of it so that they thirst for more and fall at last afflicted with the dropsy. It sports along its way, gently murmuring, and men desiring more of it actually plunge in and bathe all their limbs in its tide. The

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*Early Hist. of Mankind*, N. Y., p. 363; the two fountains (one of milk, one of pleasure) in Lucian's *True History*; for the Norse fountains of Mimir and Urd, see Rydberg, *Teut. Myth.*, pp. 223, 225, 317, and § 72; see also the well *Hvergelmer*, Rydberg, p. 353. Mimir's fountain seems to be the source of wisdom, see *ibid.*, p. 357. For the position of Ygdrasil over the fountains, see *ibid.*, pp. 225, 285 f. See also the casks of mead in the *Serglige Conculaind* (Brown, *Yvain*, pp. 34 ff.) and in the Norse Otherworld (Rydberg, p. 223); the wells of balm and wine in the *Land of Cockayne*, Furnivall, *Early Eng. Poems and Lives of the Saints*, 156; Fortune offers great urns of good and bad fortune; see too the drink of the blessed in the East Indian heaven, H. Oldenberg, *die Religion des Veda*, Berlin, 1894, pp. 530 ff.

<sup>68</sup> See Zimmer's summary of the traits of the Celtic Otherworld, *ZDAIth.*, xxxiii, pp. 280 ff.

<sup>69</sup> The Anglo-Saxon version, Grein, *Bibl. A.-S. Poesie*, Leipzig, 1897, III, ll. 62.

<sup>70</sup> *Midrash Kohen* (*Hebrew Encycl.*, p. 516). For other streams in the Otherworld gardens, see the river of Paradise in Raoul de Houdaig, Jubinal, *Rutebeuf*, II, 227-260 (*Voie de Paradis*), cited by Wright, *St. Pat. Purg.*, p. 109; see the fairy pavilion of Aalardin del Lac on the banks of a stream, Paton, *Fairy Mythol.*, p. 168.

<sup>71</sup> *Anticlaudianus*, referred to above.

other stream is dark and sulphurous. Its color confounds the sight, its savor the taste, its rush the ear, and its odor overcomes the nostril. The stream sweeps along a great throng of people, sucking down some and spuing others forth, burying many in its floods. At length it joins the other stream and makes that one also cloudy and bitter.

Dante also gives us the two rivers, Lethe and Eunoë, of contrasting quality, flowing in the garden of Paradise on the top of Purgatory. This tradition may possibly go back to the twin fountains, Mnemosyne and Lethe, of Greek mythology.<sup>72</sup>

A constant tradition in the Otherworld is that of four rivers, and this, I think, can be more surely identified. According to the Old Testament, a river went out of Eden to water the garden and it was divided into four sources: Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and the Euphrates. In the Italian legend already mentioned the four rivers are named again: Tigris, Euphrates, Gehon, and Phison; but the similarity is close enough to recognize them.<sup>73</sup> In Prester John's letter, the fountain of Adam's Paradise divides into four rivers: Tygris, Geon, Phison, and Eufrates.<sup>74</sup> In the Jewish *Midrash Kohen*, the fifth chamber of the Paradise borders on the river Gihon, on whose banks are planted aromatic shrubs.<sup>75</sup> The Norse Eric, who must have been acquainted with Oriental lore therefore, comes to a river which he thinks is the Pison.<sup>76</sup> There can be little question, then, about the origin of this tradition,<sup>77</sup> and obviously it is widely known.

<sup>72</sup> See J. E. Harrison, *Pr. to the Study of Greek Relig.*, Cambridge, 1908, 2d ed., pp. 574 ff.

<sup>73</sup> D'Ancona and Bacci, *Manuale*, I, p. 437.

<sup>74</sup> *Abhandlungen (Sächsische)*, VIII, p. 123, § 14; p. 168, § 40. See also VII, p. 839, § 23.

<sup>75</sup> *Hebrew Encyc.*, p. 516.

<sup>76</sup> Rydberg, *Teut. Mythol.*, pp. 208 ff.

<sup>77</sup> See also the rivers Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates,

Perhaps we may be justified in going even further and in identifying the four streams when they sometimes appear but are not named. The fountain in the tower of Grosseteste's *Chateau* feeds four such rivulets. In the *Land of Cockayne* there are rivers of oil, milk, wine, and honey.<sup>78</sup> Maffreth, the preacher, in describing the paradise on a mountain in eastern Asia, said that the waters of the four rivers fell in a cascade down to the lake at its foot with such a roar as to deafen the inhabitants.<sup>79</sup> And we can now speak with a little more definiteness about the Orchard of the Emir in *Floris and Blanchefleur*, where the neighboring river is the Euphrates:

De l'autre part, cou m'est avis  
Court uns flueves de paradis.<sup>80</sup>

Although the maidenland appears here, and that is commonly considered a sure sign of the Celtic paradise, the Celts were far from having a monopoly of such a concep-

Baring-Gould, *Cur. Myths*, p. 251. Although cf. the four streams (springing, to be sure, at the four corners of the earth) in Amer. Indian tradition,—D. G. Brinton, *Religions of Primitive Peoples*, Putnam, 1897, 2d series, pp. 126 f.

<sup>78</sup> Compare the rivers of milk, wine, honey, and balsam, in the Jewish Paradise, *Hebrew Encyc.*, p. 517.

<sup>79</sup> Baring-Gould, *Cur. Myths*, p. 255. See also p. 253 and p. 258, the reference to Hugo de St. Victor. The land of Parnapishtim, in Babylonian faith, was "at the confluence of the streams"; see Jastrow, *Relig. Bab. and Assy.*, p. 489. For other examples of the four rivers, see Avitus, *Mon. Germ. Histor.*, Auct. Antiq., vi, 2, p. 208; see Honorius of Autun, Migne, *Pat. Lat.*, CLXXII, col. 123; L. Twining, *Symbols and Emblems*, London, 1852, plate xvii, fig. 4, xxxvi, fig. 8; Mone, *Lat. Hymn*, i, pp. 159-160.

<sup>80</sup> Ed. du Mériel, Paris, 1856, ll. 1721-1844. O. M. Johnston, *Zeits. f. Roman. Philol.*, xxxii, pp. 705-10, noticed the Otherworldliness of this landscape. The romance has Oriental affinities as a whole, and I think that this part of it can be related to Oriental lore with a good deal of certainty.



tion,<sup>81</sup> and all other indications point to an Oriental source.

(b) The trees and birds:

The tree of life must, of course, be represented in the Otherworld, but, as in the case of the fountain, it is a universal conception and there is little to mark any particular form of the tradition. Sometimes the leaves are brilliantly colored,<sup>82</sup> and sometimes the fragrance is men-

<sup>81</sup>The castle has 140 maidens; see Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 709. For the Celtic maidenland, see Weston, *The Leg. of Sir Gawain*, 1897, pp. 32 ff.; Nutt, *Voy. Bran*, I, pp. 169, 198; Zimmer, *ZDAlt*, xxxiii, pp. 280 ff.; Brown, *Yvain*, p. 29; *Imram Mailduin*, §§ 17, 28; *The story of Ciabán*, Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 96, Zimmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 269. There is no need to pile up instances in Celtic. It is generally assumed that this feature is a sure mark of the Celtic Otherworld, although some references to the contrary are cited by MacCulloch, *Relig. Anc. Celts*, pp. 185 ff. See the theme in Oriental literature: the *Qur' An*, lv, 45, the maids of modest glances and the bright and large eyed maids, and see xxxviii, 50, and lvi, 20; note "the well-shapen, strong and tall-formed maid, with the dogs at her side," who "makes the soul of the righteous one go up above the Hara-berezaiti," *Vendidad*, xix, 30. See the isle of Calypso and the description in the Tenth Pythian Ode and the isle of the Hesperides. See the twelve red-clad maidens of the Otherworld in the Norse story of Helge Thoreson, Rydberg, *Teut. Mythol.*, p. 211; Saxo, *Dan. Hist.* (trans. Elton, London, 1894), lxviii; the daughters of Gudmund in the story of Gorm, Rydberg, pp. 212-14, Saxo, pp. 344-352. It is interesting to note that the setting of the Arthurian *Castel Puellarum* is not in the west, as that of the Celtic Otherworld, but "in aquilonari parte Britannie." Again, in *Percyvelle of Gaylles*, Lufamour of Maydenland is besieged by the *Sultan* (who, to be sure, was the usual villain of the mediæval story). In *De Ortu Waluواني* the champion against whom Gawain fights is named Gromundus (cf. the Norse). For the Arthurian material see: Lot, *Romania*, xxiv, p. 330 (Avalon), xxvii, p. 553; Bruce, *PMLA*, xiii, pp. 380 ff.; Brown, *PMLA*, xx, pp. 697. In many of these romances, the *royaume aux demoiselles* is separated from us not by the ocean, as in the Celtic, but by the river, which I shall discuss in the last section of this study.

<sup>82</sup>See the *Serglige Conculaind*, Brown, *Yvain*, pp. 34 ff., the trees of purple, silver, and the three-score trees nourishing the three

tioned or the rich fruit.<sup>83</sup> The Fortune tradition introduces certain original details of its own although it appropriates some details. Thus according to Fregoso, Fortune grows a large tree on her mountain-top and gives away the apples, as prizes apparently, to those who ascend.<sup>84</sup> De Guileville sends his pilgrim across the sea and in mid-ocean lets him discover a tree standing there, filled with nests high and low, large and small, in which people of varying degrees are nesting, people whom the fickle goddess pulls down occasionally with a forked stick.<sup>85</sup>

hundred men apiece. See Nutt, *Voy. Bran*, I, p. 187, for the tree of golden leaves. Note the branch of leaves of gold, silver, blue, and green, and wonderfully sweet fruit in the Italian story, D'Ancona and Bacci, *Manuale*, I, pp. 437 ff.

<sup>83</sup> See the apple brought by the strange lady in *Connla the Fair*, Brown, *Yvain*, p. 28; the "pomeriferous and odoriferous" trees, *de Arte Honesti Amandi*, Neilson (*Court of Love*), p. 46; the interpretation of Avalon as the isle of apples, Lot, *Romania*, xxiv, p. 502. For the Celtic in general see MacCulloch, *Relig. Anc. Celts*, pp. 178 ff. See also the Tree of Life in *Revelation*, which bore twelve manner of fruits and yielded her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. See the *Vision of Tundale*, Becker, *Med. Vis.*, p. 84; *Bk. of Enoch*, *ibid.*, p. 24, § xxiv; the Persian Gaokerena, which has the white Haoma (a fruit driving away sickness), Spiegel, *Avesta*, III, LIV; see the tree hung with precious stones found by Gilgamesh, Jeremias, *Bab. Conc. Heav. Hell*, pp. 34 ff.; for the Hindu, see, *Hindu Lit.* (World's Gt. Classics), Col. Press, 1900, Poems of Toru Dutt, p. 463; Bayley, *Lost Lang. of Symb.*, ch. xx, and II, p. 369, the tree in the happy isles of the Eastern Ocean, coiling its leaves 3000 miles high, with the golden cock sitting at the top; see Nutt, *Voy. Bran*, I, p. 249, the trees in *Barl. and Jos.*, which make music; see Staerk, *Ueber den Ursprung der Grallegende*, p. 45; see the wood where each tree is as straight as an arrow and higher than earthly man ever saw, Baring-Gould, *Cur. Myths*, p. 255; see the tree the emblem of life among the Amer. Indians, Brinton, *Religions of Prim. Peoples*, 1897, 2d series, pp. 126 f.

<sup>84</sup> *Dial di F.*, cap. XIII.

<sup>85</sup> *Le Rommant des Trois Pel.*, ed. 1511, *Pel. de l'Homme*, fol. lxxvj vo. Cf. the tree in Sir Gilbert Hay, *Buke of the Lawe of Armys*, ed. Stevenson, *STS.*, 1901, I, pp. lxxiii. In the Fortune tradition, Alanus

The Norse Ygdrasil is a unique figure in that it was of importance not because of its fruit but because it seems to have held the world together as a great central source of vitality, or rather as a kind of great cosmic pillar.<sup>86</sup> In this connection, I may mention that strange phenomenon in Otherworld descriptions, the column or pillar, which appears somehow in most of the accounts, sometimes of silver, sometimes jewelled, sometimes even musical.<sup>87</sup>

Birds, of course, lived in the Otherworld trees and were famous for their singing. In the Court of Love poems, the birds sing matins and other ecclesiastical services.<sup>88</sup> Possibly this conception comes from some idea of the bird-paradise in the Celtic,<sup>89</sup> although it is not limited to the

de Insulis has of course two trees—one in full blossom, and one quite barren.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. the mountain conceived as the sacred pillar around which the heavenly spheres revolve, Ragozin, *Story of Chaldaea*, p. 276, and p. 153.

<sup>87</sup> It too is a universal conception. See the pillar of silver and glass, *Serg. Conc.*, Brown, *Yvain*, pp. 34 ff.; the silver column with a net hanging from its summit, *Imram Mailduin*, § 26 (*Rev. Celt.* ix, pp. 447 ff., x, pp. 50 ff.); the columns of heaven, *Bk. of Enoch* (Becker, *Med. Vis.*, p. 23, § XVIII); three pillars, *Vis. of Thurcill*, (Becker, p. 96); the burning pillar reaching to heaven, *Vision of Tundale* (Becker, p. 84); columns of gold, Apuleius (Neilson, *Court of Love*, p. 14); pillars representing the months, Neilson, p. 42; see also *ibid.*, p. 50 and 124; *Sir Orpheo*, l. 353, the fair pillars; the column in the *Imago Mundi*, Wright, *St. Pat. Purg.*, p. 95; pillars in the Hebrew heaven, some of silver and gold, one that plays music automatically, *Hebrew Encyc.*, p. 516. Cf. also the Norse Irminsöl.

<sup>88</sup> See Neilson, *Court of Love*, pp. 216 ff., where the tradition is studied. See for example, the *Messe des Oisais*.

<sup>89</sup> See the bird-songs in the island described by the lady of Mag Mell, *Voy. Bran* (Brown, *Yvain*, pp. 58; Nutt, *Voy. Bran*; Zimmer, *ZDAlt.*, xxxiii, pp. 258 ff.); note the island of birds, *Imram Mailduin* (Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 60); the birds which are really souls in the *Fis Adamnain*, Boswell, *An Irish Precursor of Dante*, § 33; Schirmer, *Zur Brend. Leg.*, p. 34; (also the old man in white garb of feathers); the birds singing psalms and canticles in the *Imram Snedgusa*

Celtic so far as its use is concerned, for here again the Orient offers striking parallels.<sup>90</sup> The origin, it seems reasonable to suppose, may be found in the fundamental conception of human souls in the form of birds.

### III

#### THE RIVER

The journey to the Otherworld is nearly always over an expanse of water, frequently across the sea itself. The Celts conceived the Otherworld as separated from us by a mist,<sup>91</sup> as hidden beneath the waves,<sup>92</sup> or as a remote

(Zimmer, *ZDAlth.*, xxxiii, p. 212; see Boswell, *op. cit.*, pp. 163); the bird matins in the Eng. *Voy. of St. Brendan*, Percy Soc. xiv, p. 10; birds in the *Imram curaig UaCorra*, Zimmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 189 (the birds are souls which come forth from Hell on Sunday, the three streams of them differentiated by markings); also note the purple-headed birds; the feathered roof in the *Echtra Cormaic*, Zimmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 264. See Zimmer's summary of the Otherworld qualities, *op. cit.*, pp. 280 ff., and Brown, *Yvain*, p. 85. Note also the swan maidens in the Norse and in Celtic, Cross, *Mod. Philol.*, xii, p. 620; the geese in *Cockayne* (Furnivall, *Early Eng. Poems*, 156); the land of the Phoenix.

<sup>90</sup> For the Oriental, Boswell has noted the sacred birds on the tree in the Persian garden (*Ir. Prec. of Dante*, p. 85; see also p. 174, n. 1, and p. 189); see also Spiegel, *Avesta*, iii, liv; and Bayley, *Lost Lang. of Symb.*, ii, pp. 241 and 301.

<sup>91</sup> See the *Echtra Cormaic*, Zimmer, *ZDAlth.*, xxxiii, pp. 264 ff.; Nutt, *Voy. Bran*, i, pp. 187, 190; Zimmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 280 ff.; see the Arthurian *Val sanz Retor*, Paton, *Fairy Mythol.*, p. 82, p. 84, n. 3; see the Welsh *Geraint*, Loth, *Les Mab.*, p. 170. We must note, however, that the mist also appears in the Norse, see Rydberg, *Teut. Mythol.*, pp. 220 ff., and in the stories in Saxo (Elton's Trans.), pp. 37, 84—the latter noted by Miss Paton, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

<sup>92</sup> See *Imram Bran*, Brown, *Yvain*, p. 59; *Gillie of the Ferule*, *ibid.*, p. 101, and Hyde, Irish Texts Soc., London, 1899; *the Slothful Gillie*, Brown, pp. 104 ff.; Baring-Gould, *Cur. Myths*, p. 540; Nutt, *Voy. Bran*, i, pp. 195, 202-3; Miss Paton, *Fairy Mythol.*, pp. 168-9, 169, n. 3, p. 185 (*Lanzelet*); Gervase of Tilbury, *Ot. Imper.*, ed. Liebrecht,

island. All these facts are very well known, and it is also recognized that the conception of the island is by far the most common of the three, that in fact one might consider it the typically Celtic idea of the Otherworld. I do not mean to imply that the Celts alone had such a belief,<sup>93</sup> but that, so far as the Celts are concerned it is the most characteristic view among them. And from the very fact of this island myth, it is certainly safe to say that the prevalent account among the Celts of the journey

I, c. 13, p. 2 (cited by Wright, *St. Pat. Purg.*, pp. 27-8); compare the idea that Paradise is situated between heaven and earth, Baring-Gould, *op. cit.*, p. 255; Cross, *Mod. Philol.*, XIII, pp. 731 ff.; Hibbard, *Romanic Review*, IV, p. 167, and see note 1, *ibid.*, for a list of Celtic instances; Brown, *Celtic Caldrons of Plenty*, *Kitt. Ann. Vol.*, p. 377; and see the realm of the Fata Morgana in Bojardo's *Orl. Innam.* II, VII, 42.

<sup>93</sup>See Horace's 16th Epode, Lucian's *True History*, the Greek Hesperides, Elysium, Ogygia, the isle of Calypso, and Atlantis; the Egyptian voyage with the sun-god, Maspero, *Dawn*, p. 197; Jastrow, *Relig. of Bab. and Assyr.*, p. 489 f.; Cockayne is across the sea; the Fortunate isles (mentioned by Pindar; Plutarch's *Lives*, ed. Langhorne, IV, p. 11; Dietrich's *Nekya*, 32; Dante, *de Monarchia*, II, 387 ff.; Vincent of Beauvais, *Spec. Hist.*, lib. I, c. LXXIX; Aen. Sylv., *Op. Omnia*, p. 355, *Hist. de Asia Min.* LXXVIII); Baring-Gould, *Cur. Myths*, pp. 253, 257, 258, 543; the Phoenix; Bayley, *Lost Lang. Symb.*, II, pp. 225 ff. and 307 f.; the island of Fortune in the *Anticlaudianus*.

Among the Celts, the island theme is found: in the journey to Mag Mell, *Connla the Fair*, *Serglige Conculaind*; see *Ciabán* (Brown, *Yvain*, p. 96); in the *Imram of Bran*, of *Mailduin*, etc.; in the *Voyage of Brendan*. See Zimmer, *ZDAlt.*, XXXIII, pp. 280 ff.; Nutt, *Voy. Bran*, I, p. 229; Boswell, *Ir. Prec. of Dante*, p. 136; MacCulloch, *Relig. of the Anc. Celts*, pp. 262 ff. There is no need to add further illustrations of this theme, but see the similar theme of the lake bordering on the Otherworld: Baring-Gould, *op. cit.*, p. 255; Curoi's home in the *Fled Bricrend*, Brown, *Yvain*, p. 51; cf. *Serglige Conc.*, Labraid lives beyond a "pure lake," Brown, pp. 34 ff.; Peredur finds the Grail castle near a lake, Loth, *Les Mab.*, II, p. 56; cf. the sea Pûitika in the Persian, Spiegel, *Avesta*, III, LIV; cf. the realm of the shape-shifter Proteus, *Odyssey*, IV, ll. 414.

to the Otherworld, if it took into account any passage over water at all, required a long voyage.<sup>94</sup> That is the final impression one would certainly get from the great Imram of the ancient Celtic hero as well as from many other stories dealing with the subject.

Reflections, almost undoubtedly of this Celtic view, turn up in Arthurian romance and have long been clearly identified. Thus there is only a little doubt<sup>95</sup> that Avalon is an example of the type of remote island accessible only to the voyage we are discussing; so too is the Isle de Voire.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>94</sup> D'Arbois de Jubainville, *Le Cycle Mythologique Irlandais*, Paris, p. 351, says that death is always conceived among the Irish as a voyage. Rhys, *Arthurian Legend*, p. 358, notes the prevalence of the island theme; see pp. 348 ff. for various islands.

<sup>95</sup> Miss Paton does draw attention to the fact that William of Malmesbury's *insula Pomorum* and that in the *Vita Merlini* are "surprisingly barren of many features characteristic of the Celtic Otherworld," but that they resemble rather the Fortunate Isles (*Fairy Mythol.*, p. 39 f.). I imagine that much more evidence of this kind might be brought forward with little trouble. She notes (pp. 45-6) the possible influence of the *Phoenix* or of other Latin models on such descriptions as are found in Geoffrey's *GRB*. Probably Avalon, originally Celtic, borrowed many traits at a later time from other types of Otherworlds, as I am attempting to show that the Arthurian Otherworld did in general. For evidence that Arthur's pilot Barintus is St. Barri of the Brendan legend and originally a prince of the Otherworld, see Brown, *Rev. Celt.*, xxii, pp. 339 ff.

<sup>96</sup> For Avalon and the Isle de Voire, see Paris, *Romania*, xii, pp. 510 ff.; Nutt, *Voy. Bran*, I, p. 237, and the *Leg. Holy Grail*; Paton, *Fairy Mythol.*, pp. 74 ff.; Lot, *Romania*, xxiv, p. 502; xxvii, p. 529; a correction of Lot, *MLN*, xiv, pp. 93-5. For the Isle de Voire and the scene of the Joie de la Cour, see Philipot, *Romania*, xxv, pp. 258 ff. The upshot of the discussion concerning Avalon and Glastonbury seems to be that the former is the earlier, and the latter came to be identified with it in the twelfth century. How Glastonbury achieved such a reputation (except because of its name, Glas-ton) is not entirely explained. Avalon was originally the realm of the Welsh Evalach, see Rhys, *Arthur. Leg.*, p. 337, and Kempe, *EETS, ES.*, xcv, pp. xi ff. Note also in this connection the Celtic Dun-an-Oir, Paton, pp. 133-5; and the realm in *Huon de Bordeaux*, *ibid.*, p. 131. On the

The Celts, then, laid great emphasis on the long voyage, and the scene of their Otherworld was on an island; but this idea would explain only a small part of the Otherworld descriptions in mediæval literature. Quite frequently the Otherworld is separated from us, not by the ocean but merely by a river.<sup>97</sup> This point has been noticed but rarely, and even then, it seems to me, without anything like the proper appreciation of its significance. Thus one critic, who shows acute powers of analysis in studying versions of the Otherworld accounts, passes lightly over this situation. Of Otherworld realms his statement is as follows:

C'étaient primitivement des îles lointaines, accessibles aux seuls navigateurs; puis elles se sont rapprochées peu à peu de la terre; elles n'ont plus été séparées de la côte que par un bras de mer; ce bras de mer n'est même le plus souvent qu'une simple rivière, presque un fossé, que l'on traverse sur un pont.<sup>98</sup>

Such a theory of evaporation, while it may seem justified by the shrinking of the ocean to an estuary and while it

realm in the isle of Malta, see Paris, *Romania*, xx, p. 149, and xxxix, pp. 83-86. See the "water wan" in the ballad of Thomas Rymer (*Eng. and Scot. Ballads*, no. 37). See the isle and the bridge, *Huth Merlin*, SATF, ed. Paris and Ulrich, Paris, 1886, II, p. 59.

<sup>97</sup> Dante combines ocean and river in the *Purgatorio* and thus uses both the mountain and island themes as well as the river. The river separates him from the garden just before his vision of Beatrice. See the *De Phyllide et Flora* (Neilson, *Court of Love*, p. 34) —at the entrance of the Paradise of Love murmurs a river; see the home of Fortune, "rivo cinctus et muro, duae illic portae et atra cornea, altera candenti nitens elephante," in Aenius Sylvius, *Op. Omnia*, Pont. Ep., lib. I, Ep. cviii (the description shows Virgilian influence obviously enough); the realm of the Fata Morgana (which is underwater, but that does not affect the point) in Bojardo, *Orl. Innam.*, II, VII, 42 ff.; one might add the moat surrounding the Celestial City in *Pilgrim's Progress*, to take a familiar example from a later time. Other examples in the period will be cited in the course of the discussion.

<sup>98</sup> Philipote, *Romania*, xxv, p. 267.

seems to be the one generally accepted, in no way really accounts for the discarding of the long voyage which, as we have seen, was practically the *sine qua non* of the Celtic Otherworld. The change is not to be explained by the fact that the Otherworld scene in mediæval times was frequently laid in a castle and castles usually were not cut off from the surrounding country by an ocean but rather by a moat. What made the story-tellers allow the important voyage to be lost sight of and the waters, which are very essential to the Celtic version, to dwindle away in this remarkable manner?

It is to be noticed that the rivers, which survive the process, have marked traits of their own. Although they in no way suggest the Celtic oceans, nor does the crossing of them recall the voyages, yet they are clearly not ordinary rivers and they have still the power of telling that they too have been in some Arcady of their own. For instance, the stronghold of the Joie de la Cour in the *Erec* was surrounded by a very deep stream: "Lee et bruians come tanpête."<sup>99</sup> In the *Chevalier du Papegau*, the river surrounding the country and the Chasteaux Perilleux "ne sembloit autre chose fors que ung enfer."<sup>100</sup> Graelent's lady warns him that the river they are going to cross is very swift and deep and it is death for him to follow her over it.<sup>101</sup> Lanval's horse trembles before the fateful

<sup>99</sup> *Erec*, ll. 5374; see the drawbridge, ll. 5493. Cf. the *Geraint*, Loth, *Les Mab.*, II, p. 156: "Une grande rivière, un pont sur la rivière"—here Chrétien seems to have the earlier version. Note, however, the Celtic mist in the Welsh, p. 170.

<sup>100</sup> Brown, *PMLA*, xx, pp. 697 ff. The original is not accessible to me.

<sup>101</sup> Le Grand d'Aussy, *Fabl. ou Contes*, I, Choix et Extraits, p. 22, second column, ll. 40:

Parmi le bos lor voie tinrent  
De si qu'à la rivièr vinrent,



river which he attempts to cross.<sup>102</sup> In the *Mule sanz Frain* flows an ugly stream:

. . . il vint a l'eve noire  
 Qui estoit plus bruianz que Loire;  
 De li tant voil dire sanz plus,  
 C'onques si laide ne vit nus,  
 Si orrible ne si cruel.<sup>103</sup>

A similar stream appears in the *Chevalier de la Charrette*, and its effect on Lancelot is indeed strange:

Quant cil sant l'eve, si tressaut,  
 Toz estordiz an estant saut,  
 Aussi come cil qui s'esvoille,  
 S'ot et si voit et se mervoille.<sup>104</sup>

Further in the same poem we read concerning this remarkable river:

Et voient l'eve selenesse,  
 Roide et bruiant, noire et espesse,  
 Si leide et si espoantable  
 Con se fust li fluns au deable,  
 Et tant perilleuse et parfonde  
 Qu'il n'est riens nule an tot le monde  
 S'ele i cheoit, ne fust alee  
 Aussi com an la mer salee.<sup>105</sup>

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Ki en une lande sortoit  
 Et parmi le foreste couroit.

See also p. 23, l. 1. Graelent nearly drowns.

<sup>102</sup> *Lanval*, ll. 54. The island appears here too, ll. 539, and in *Sir Launfal* (Ritson and Goldsmid, II, 1 ff.); *Landvall* (*Am. J. Philol.*, x, pp. 22, 32); *Sir Lambewell*, *PFMS*, I, p. 164; *Lamwell*, *PFMS*, I, p. 524—note:

The kynges doughter of Mylyon  
 That is an yle in fayry  
 In oxyan full nere therby.

<sup>103</sup> Ll. 391 (ed. Hill). See the bridge, ll. 403 ff. Professor Kittredge draws attention to the description of the river (*Gaw. Green Knight*, p. 243).

<sup>104</sup> Ll. 777. See the bridge, ll. 660. Once during the fight Lancelot's shield and lance begin floating away, ll. 846-7.

<sup>105</sup> Ll. 3023. See the sword bridge, ll. 677.

Gawain in the *Perceval* stories finds such a river about the castle of ladies,<sup>106</sup> and Perceval himself must cross such a stream before arriving at the Grail castle.<sup>107</sup>

There are many rivers of this kind,<sup>108</sup> and while they might be explained by the ocean myth so far as their depth or even breadth is concerned—the quotation from the

<sup>106</sup> Chrétien, *Contes del Graal* (ms. Paris fr. 794), ll. 7191:

Sor une rivièrre parfonde  
E fu lee que nule fonde  
De mangonel ne de perriere  
Ne gitast oltre la rivièrre  
Ne arbaleste n'i tressist.

Cf. Wolfram (ed. Bartsch, 1875), x, ll. 962:

ein wazzer daz dâ flôz  
schifræhe, snel, unde breit,  
da engein er unt diu frouwe reit.

<sup>107</sup> Chrétien, *CG*, ll. 2950:

L'eve roide et parfonde esgarde  
Et ne s'ose metre dedanz  
Et dist: ha sire dez puissanz  
Qui ceste eve passee avroit  
Dela ma mere troveroit.

Cf. Wolfram, v, 1173 ff. See also the river near Pelrepär in Wolfram, iv, ll. 47 ff., and Chrétien, ll. 1685. In the Old French *Perlesvaus*, the Grail castle is on a high rock above the sea (branch XI, title 1). In the *Peredur*, the castle is not far from a lake, see Loth, *Les Mab.*, II, p. 56. See Nitze, *PMLA*, xxiv, p. 375.

<sup>108</sup> See for the river, Sommer, *Vulgate Vers. of the Arthur Romances*, VII, Livre d'Artus, p. 144, "la rivièrre estoit lee et noire et parfonde et plaine de fane car li pais estoit molt en bas leu et est encores"; see vol. iv, p. ii (Livre de Lancelot), p. 118, also p. 193, p. 200 "roide et noire." Also P. Paris, *RTRonde*, Paris, 1877, 5, p. 53; *Le Vallon des Fauz Amants*, Le Grand D'Aussy, *Fabl. ou Contes*, p. 156; see also the wild mountain torrent in the German *Minneburg*, Neilson, *Court of Love*, p. 124; see the boiling torrent, Paton, *Fairy Mythol.*, p. 82; see the river in the Netherlandish poem, clean and fresh and burning like fire, cited by Paris, *Romania*, XII, p. 508 f.; see the *Huth Merlin*, II, 96; see Weston, *Leg. of Sir Gaw.*, p. 230.

*Charrette* might lend some evidence for that point <sup>109</sup>—yet that certainly would not account for their hideous and fearful quality. Even if we should grant that in an isolated case or two <sup>110</sup> the ocean did become strangely reduced, we surely could not believe the operation to have been almost universal, and even then the nature of the river would remain unexplained. Nothing in Celtic lore,<sup>111</sup> be it remembered, seems to account for this peculiar nature, for the quality of connotation which is attached to the river, for the kind of obstacle which it affords or for its strange personality, so to speak. The roaring, ugly river, over which a knight attempts to cross on horseback—by means of a bridge usually—on his way to the Otherworld, cannot in any way be deduced from the Celtic journeys to under-the-wave-land, or to the land beyond the mist, or certainly to the blessed isles.

If we grant this point, it seems to me the rest follows, that the safest conjecture in determining the source of the

<sup>109</sup> See *Chev. Char.*, ll. 3029-30; *Contes del Graal*, ll. 7194-5.

<sup>110</sup> If Glastonbury replaced Avalon, its description would in a measure account for the not-very-distant island or the Otherworld surrounded by a river. It was on a piece of land encircled by marshy country. See Rhys, *Arthur. Leg.*, p. 330. Note also Rhys, p. 240, for Rheged on an island connected with the mainland by a bridge. Cf. the peninsular realm of King Beauvoisin in the *Chev. du Papegau*, Brown, *PMLA*, xx, pp. 697. Nitze (*Mod. Philol.*, i, 247 ff.) attempts to show that the *Perlesvaus* description of Avalon was founded on Glastonbury. Perhaps he is right; but the argument for very general influence of this sort depends on the measure of probability in the idea that one locality with its details of local color was universally borrowed by continental as well as by insular poets for their accounts of the Otherworld, not merely in Arthurian accounts but elsewhere. See note 97 above. Also such a theory fails to account for the quality of the river.

<sup>111</sup> Evidence is slight on the side of Welsh mythology. There is a possibility, of course, that the answer to everything may be found there.

river barrier to the Otherworld is in relating it to non-Celtic material. I should say this even in the case of those rivers where the stormy or turbid element is absent.<sup>112</sup> They too are so numerous and are such an easy development from the turbulent rivers (where the reason for the turbulence was forgotten and the main point, that of being a barrier, had to be retained) that they do not seem weak representatives of the old Celtic ocean.

Some evidence supporting my view indirectly has been afforded by scholars in relation to the bridge. Much has been written on this topic, and although it is bold to say so in the face of some excellent scholarship, it seems to me that much of the recent work on the subject has been going astray rather from prejudice than from the nature of the evidence. Nearly everybody seems to grant that the so-called "soul-bridge" is not a Celtic conception but that it comes from the Orient.<sup>113</sup> A turn to this theory was given, however, when Gaston Paris attempted to show concerning the bridge in general that "Cette croyance était également répandue chez les Celtes."<sup>114</sup> But his

<sup>112</sup> Cf. *Eger and Grime*, *PFMS*, I, p. 360, ll. 187, the "running strand"; *Lancelot of the Laik*, *EETS*, ed. Skeat, London, 1865, p. 21, l. 683, the river near the land of the Lady of Melyhalt; the moat in the *Perlesvaus* (*High Hist. of the Holy Grail*, Evans, Everyman ed., p. 206); the "fair river hight Severn," Malory *XIII*, ch. xv; the Anglo-Saxon *Elene*, ll. 136-7; Watriquet de Couvin (ed. Scheler, p. 246), *Tourn. des Dames*, ll. 472; the *Pearl*, ll. 107 ff.; and the rivers mentioned in note 97 above. Good evidence is found in the cases where the river surely cannot represent the Celtic ocean, as surrounding the garden of Dante's *Purgatory*.

<sup>113</sup> See Hibbard, *Romanic Rev.*, iv, p. 175; Becker, *Med. Vis.*, p. 17; Tylor, *Researches into the Early Hist. of Mankind*, p. 359; Kittredge, *Gaw. Gr. Knight*, p. 244, n. 1; Ward, *Cat. Romances*, London, 1893, II, 399; Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 1902, III, p. 168 (for some interesting references).

<sup>114</sup> *Romania*, XII, p. 508 f. See also Baring-Gould, *Cur. Myths*, p.

evidence was drawn either from the field of romance, and that begs the question, or it was drawn from mediæval visions which are clearly related to Oriental sources.<sup>115</sup> Miss Hibbard's recent study tracing the sword-bridge back to Celtic folk-games and thus removing that form from mythology,<sup>116</sup> follows Paris by inclining to hold that the bridge has a natural place in Celtic folklore and religion. Of the six cases of Celtic bridges which she cites as examples of those which are not related to the soul-bridge,<sup>117</sup> four can manifestly be thus derived from originally Oriental material<sup>118</sup>; for they offer the same type of obstacle and the same sort of test as that of the Oriental bridge, although sometimes their methods differ. And any of the Celtic bridges—apparently they are not so very numerous<sup>119</sup>—may be derived from a Norse con-

248. And see Baist, *Zs. f. rom. Philol.*, xiv, p. 159; Brown, *Yvain*, p. 124.

<sup>115</sup> The *Purgatory of St. Patrick* and the *Vision of Tungdale*. See Becker, *op. cit.*

<sup>116</sup> *Romanic Rev.*, iv, pp. 166 ff. See also for material on the bridge, Paton, *Fairy Mythol.*, p. 84, n. 3.

<sup>117</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 179.

<sup>118</sup> The bridge of glass (*Mailduin*, ix)—when anyone stepped on it he fell backwards; the rope bridge, *Tochmarc Emere*, which resembles the rope bridge in Wolfram, iv, ll. 41 ff., which in turn is like the Oriental bridge famous for its thinness; the bridge of the *Echtra Airt*, crossing the icy river; and the bridge (Hibbard, *Romanic Rev.*, iv, p. 180, n. 25) in the Tannhäuser legend which crosses a torrent. With the glass bridge cf. that in *Harv. Studies and Notes*, v, p. 167. The obstacle bridge lends itself easily to variations which the Celtic fancy might contribute.

<sup>119</sup> See the previous note. See the water arch in *Imr. Mailduin* (*Rev. Celt.*, x, p. 59); the active bridge of the cliff in the *Wooing of Emer*, Brown, *PMLA*, xx, pp. 688 ff. (*Arch. Rev.*, i, pp. 234-5, 298-306); the bridge spanning the glen in the *Fis Adamnain*, Boswell, *An Irish Precursor*, the nethermost hell; the bridge of fairies in later Irish folklore, Campbell, *Pop. Tales*, ii, p. 74; i, p. 261. Of these it is well to note that the *Fis Adamnain* shows a good deal of

tribution or from the Orient,<sup>120</sup> if we only conceive that the Celts had a little opportunity to work on them with that peculiar property—the Celtic imagination.<sup>121</sup> But it is obvious that there is no real place for them in the Celtic scheme of the Otherworld.

Our material concerning the river and our argument derived from the bridge mutually support each other. If the bridge<sup>122</sup> *could* be derived from the Celtic, nothing

non-Celtic material, see Boswell, p. 184-5; p. 197: "The guise in which it [the bridge] appears in the present place, leads us to suppose that the author's immediate source of inspiration was one of the ecclesiastical legends, though we find the usual difficulty of assigning any given item to some one specific source." Also note that the bridge is probably an interpolation; note also the four rivers, p. 204. Cf. p. 112: the "connecting link, passing on to the Irish school the bridge incident, belonging to Oriental myth." Furthermore, the active bridge in the *Wooing of Emer* appears only in a late MS. (dated 1300, although from the evidence of the rest of the story in the *Book of the Dun Cow* it does seem as if the incident had once been there too) and that occurs in a version of the post-Norse type—see Meyer, *Rev. Celt.*, xi, p. 438.

<sup>120</sup> Nutt, *Voy. Bran*, I, p. 304, says: "I am by no means certain that the Norse Journey to the Otherworld . . . has not sporadically influenced Irish romance," but he does not make much of the point. Miss Hull (*Cuchullin Saga*, pp. 56 ff.) holds that the bridge in the *Wooing of Emer* came from the Norse. See Boswell, *Ir. Prec. of Dante*, p. 13. For opportunities for Oriental influence on the early Irish, see Boswell, pp. 114 ff.; Stokes, *Ireland and the Celtic Church*, London, 1900, pp. 169 ff. See the Celtic appropriation of Ygdrasil, Maclagen, *Scot. Myths*, p. 73, and see Nutt's account of the Viking influence in Ireland, *op. cit.*, p. 184 and pp. 177 ff. See Paton, *Fairy Mythol.*, p. 193. Of course, the bridge was not the property solely of the Norse or of the Moslems. See Boswell, p. 231 (the Inuits of Aleutia); Tylor, *Researches into the Early Hist. of Mankind*, pp. 358 ff.; Tylor, *Prim. Cult.*, II, pp. 50, 84.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. Thurneysen, *Keltoromanisches*, Halle, 1884, pp. 21 ff.; and Schiavo, *Zeits. f. rom. Philol.*, xvii, p. 74; Foerster, *Karrenritter*, iv, LXXI. Paris, *Romania*, xii, p. 509, gives evidence to show that mediæval writers considered the bridge of romance and the soul-bridge identical.

<sup>122</sup> See for bridges outside of mediæval romance: "Nulli accessus

in that field sufficiently explains the brawling torrent.<sup>123</sup> If, on the other hand, the bridge comes from the Oriental or the Norse mythology, the river might naturally accompany it. And what is more important, both river and bridge have a fixed and necessary place in the religion of the Norse and the Orient, as they have not among the Celts.

In the Orchard of the Emir in *Floris and Blanchefleur*, already considered, the wife and maidens of the castle had to pass over the *ruissel de la fontanele* once each year; and when the wife of the preceding year had crossed, the waters of the river became muddy and the wife was immediately cast into the fire. Here is a remnant of the Oriental myth of the river, the "swyþe gret watur" that separated heaven from hell in *St. Patrick's Purgatory*,<sup>124</sup> the black and gloomy river of fetid water that rushes through so many mediæval visions,<sup>125</sup> corresponding to the river of fire in the *Book*

ad portas nisi per pontes, qui tamen cathenis elevati paucis advenientibus dimittebantur," Aen. Sylv., *Op. Omnia*, Pont. Ep., lib. I, ep. CVIII; the bridge with the two armed figures in the Fata's realm in Bojardo, *Orl. Innam.*, II, VII, 42 ff.; see the rood-tree used as a bridge, Forster, *Northern Passion*, I, p. 166.

<sup>123</sup> See, however, the river of fire, *Voy. Malduin*, *Rev. Celt.*, IX, p. 483; the fiery river in the fifth heaven, *Fis Adamnain*, § 18, Boswell, *Ir. Prec. of Dante*.

<sup>124</sup> *EETS*, 87, ll. 405. See the bridge: "smallere ne mizte non beo."

<sup>125</sup> See Becker, *Med. Vis.*, p. 219, who has traced this whole matter. He compares the Acheron and the Styx. See also the bridge in Buddhistic lore, *Rig-Veda*, x, 63, 10, and ix, 41, 2; see Hopkins, *Relig. of India*, p. 145, and A. Kaegi, *The Rig-Veda*, trans. Arrow-smith, Boston, 1898, p. 159, n. 273. See for the river of death among the Hindus, Tylor, *Prim. Cult.*, I, p. 427. See the bridge in Japanese literature, *World's Gt. Classics*, p. 254, "The Bridge of Heaven." See the river of precious ointment around the city in Lucian's *True History*, Nutt, *Voy. Bran*, I, p. 279.

of *Enoch*,<sup>126</sup> and the burning river of the *Vision of Alberic*.<sup>127</sup> It is quite fitting for these rivers to be filthy, turbid, boiling, or burning, because they are the boundary rivers of hell itself, the barriers between earth and paradise, into which man must fall if his virtues cannot carry him across. The same point is true of the rivers in Old Norse mythology. Eric,<sup>128</sup> seeking Odainsakr, came to a river which he crossed by means of the dragon-guarded<sup>129</sup> bridge. King Gorm, after an ocean voyage, finds the realm of King Geirroð and Gudmund cut off from him by a river.<sup>130</sup> Hadding, on seeking the lower world, pierced a misty cloud and "came on a swift and tumbling river of leaden waters, whirling down on its rapid current divers sorts of missiles, and likewise made passable by a bridge."<sup>131</sup> As the ocean-voyage is an essential in the Celtic journey to the Otherworld, so crossing the river and the bridge is in the Norse. Whatever the incidental details (for the Norse too sometimes have the long voyage) Norse stories agree concerning the river and the bridge.<sup>132</sup> Around Asgard, for example, flows a rapid

<sup>126</sup> § xvii, Becker, *Med. Vis.*, p. 23.

<sup>127</sup> Becker, p. 44.

<sup>128</sup> Rydberg, *Teut. Mythol.*, pp. 208 ff.; Nutt, *Voy. Bran*, I, pp. 297 ff.

<sup>129</sup> Note in Arthurian romance the animals usually guarding the bridge: the lions in the *Perlesvaus* (*High Hist.*, Dent ed., pp. 206); in the *Charrette* Lancelot *thinks* two lions or leopards are at the other end of the bridge. See the two lions, Sommer, *Livre d'artus*, p. 144. Note the two dragons in the *Val sanz Retor*, Paton, *Fairy Mythol.*, pp. 81 ff.

<sup>130</sup> Crossed by the golden bridge. See Rydberg, *Teut. Mythol.*, pp. 212 ff.; Nutt, *Voy. Bran*, I, pp. 299; Saxo, pp. 344-352.

<sup>131</sup> Saxo, p. 38, and intro., p. lxviii; Rydberg, pp. 215-16.

<sup>132</sup> Note the Hadding story, the story of Helge (Rydberg, pp. 211 ff.), the ride of Hermóðr, *Gylfaginning*, xlix (trans. Brodeur, *Scand. Classics*, v, p. 72 f.), where the ocean voyage does not appear. See Rydberg, p. 222, on the river.



stream constituting the moat of the citadel and over its eddies floated a dark, shining, ignitable mist.<sup>133</sup>

From the foregoing, it is clear, I think, that both in the vision literature from the Orient and in the Norse mythology, the bridge and the river have a definite and natural place as they have not in the Celtic lore. The river particularly is distinguished by its forbidding qualities, which are easily explained by its function in the Oriental and Norse setting, but which is inexplicable by any appearance in the Celtic. It would take a long bridge indeed to reach to the Celtic isles of the blessed,<sup>134</sup> and the ocean would have to shrink in a manner more magical than even Arthurian romance allows for it to be transformed into the river. So again, in the river we seem to have a borrowing from the Norse Otherworld or from the Oriental or—quite possibly—from both.

## IV

### CONCLUSION

The points I have tried to make are as follows: The mountain, the four streams, and the river are borrowed from Oriental (and, perhaps in the case of the last, Norse) mythology. There is, of course, nothing new about tracing mediæval material of the Otherworld to the Orient<sup>135</sup>:

<sup>133</sup> Rydberg, p. 162 f. See for the river Gjöll and the Gjallar bridge, Rydberg, p. 222. See for the bridge Bifröst also the *Prose Edda*, *Gylfaginning*, XIII (trans. Brodeur, p. 24), xv (p. 28). The bridge connects Asgard and the lower world.

<sup>134</sup> In the *Wooing of Emer* (*Arch. Rev.*, I, pp. 234-5, 298-306) the island is not far separated from the mainland, but this is not a typical case among Celtic stories. And even here Cuchullin has to cross the ocean to get home, see I, pp. 302-3. In many of the Celtic instances which I have cited (notes 118, 119) the bridge will appear inconceivably out of place in their landscape setting.

<sup>135</sup> See the influence of Greek on Celtic, Paton, *Fairy Mythol.*, p.

the bridge has been traced to Moslem sources (and also to the Norse), and I have attempted to give that theory much greater force. The mountain, the streams, and the river seemed to be essentials in the Oriental mythology as they were not in the Celtic. On the other hand, as has long been demonstrated, the fairy hill came from the Celtic; to this influence I have been inclined to attribute also the religious services of the birds, as due to the development of the bird-paradise. In this review of material it has also become more evident that certain conceptions, such as the island, the tree of life, and the fountain, and perhaps even the maiden-land, are so universally known that they may not be used to identify the source of any particular scene. As peculiarly characteristic of Otherworld scenes, I have mentioned the curious delight in crystal and glass, and the use of the pillar, in the descriptions.

Concerning particular fields, it seems to me it is now obvious that the descriptions in the Court of Love and in the Fortune traditions are often greatly indebted to or based on accounts of the Otherworld. The descriptions of Fortune are marked by their strange use of contrasts; if anything distinguishes the Court of Love scenes, I may here remark that it seems to be the paintings or carvings of love-scenes or the like upon the walls or the interiors.

235. See the studies tracing Oriental material in the Grail, by Hagen and Staerk already mentioned; also by Wesselofsky, *Arch. Slav. Phil.*, xxiii, pp. 32 ff.; Iselin, *Der Morganländische Ursprung der Grallegende*, Halle, 1909, see pp. 506 ff.; Peebles, *Leg. Longinus*, p. 196. Also see *A Byzantine Source for G. de Lorris's RdLR*, *PMLA*, xxxi, n. s. xxiv; and F. Settegast, *Byzantinisch-Geschichtliches in Oliges und Yvain*, *Zeits. f. rom. Phil.*, xxxii, pp. 400 ff. See Hodges in *MLN*, 1917, for a partial rejection of such views in the field of romance; it will be seen that Mr. Hodges' argument holds merely for the ultimate source of the stories and does not affect the view here proposed of later accretions to the romantic scenes.

Much of the Otherworld detail in Arthurian romance, it appears, is non-Celtic. That, of course, does not in the least bear on the question of Celtic origins; for: (1) the Arthurian stories may have been Celtic and have taken on later accretions from other fields; (2) the Oriental material may have passed into Celtic lore, and although not indigenous there, have received the cast of the Celtic fancy. As evidence of the second of these possibilities, the bridge is a good example: it shows all the earmarks of Celtic development, and yet has no place in Celtic lore originally. Of the first possibility, the river is good evidence, since it appears so rarely in unadulterated Celtic narrative.

An apparent weakness in the form of the argument must be noted. The argument holds better for the general course of the material than for the individual cases. But the answer to that point is that it is from the evidence of a number of fairly sure cases that the argument proceeds; moreover, I have not been able to go into detail about all the instances because even the longest paper must have limits, but I have tried to indicate the points concerned in the study of the individual problems. As I have already said, this investigation can be only preliminary and it must be followed by a closer scrutiny of the details. Perhaps I have been too eager to shout "influence" on some occasions; but the strange coincidences, if we must call them that, in the Otherworld are striking, to say the least, and so is the constant employment of certain distinct elements in so wide a field.<sup>136</sup> There seems to be no

<sup>136</sup> The idea may have suggested itself that perhaps the appearance of certain Oriental phenomena in the west is due neither to coincidence nor influence, but that it is a case of Indo-European survival. But it is strange that the survivals are so irregular; so much so that there is no place at all for some of the elements in certain religions while they are clearly essentials in others.

particular reason to attribute everything to coincidence of human psychology or to overwork the long arm of chance, if we can explain the phenomena reasonably in some other way.

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